Pure Romance

HARLEQUIN

The Cinderella Solution

Original Text by Cassie Yardley

Kyoko Sagara

You might as well hand them a ring...! No, thanks.
Anyway, have you seen Charlotte?
She practically had "looking for a husband" written on her forehead.
You can't dance with a single woman at your sister's wedding.
Are you crazy, Gabe?
You turned down that gorgeous blonde?
What a waste
More interested in Charlotte than your future wife? You saw her yesterday, and you're seeing her again tomorrow.
Women come and go...
...but best friends are forever. That's much more important to me.

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Kyoko Sagara

Original Text by Cass Yardley

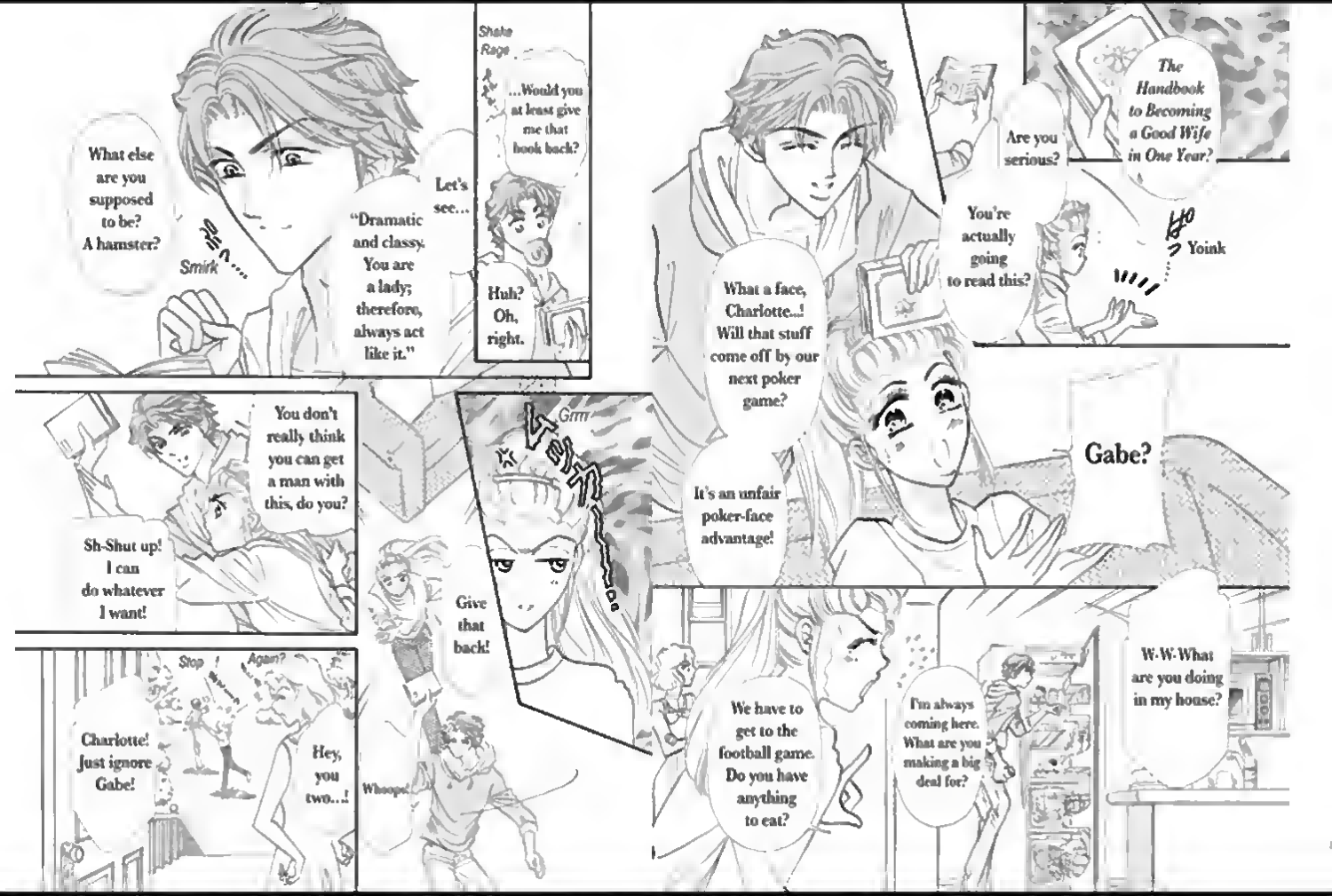
Gabe...!
You womanizing jerk...!
Gabe...!
Chuckle
She's the one who took the bet to wash each other's car for a month.
And it wasn't like I was forcing her to drink.
Then again...
...you've never won a single one of these bets with me since we were 8 years old.
Your juvenile personality is the same as when we were kids, too!
Grin
Throb
Throb
Throb
That Gabe...
...the next time I see him, he's dead!
Knock Knock
I'm not a woman to him, Bella. Just Charlotte Taylor...
...his best friend.
Unbelievable
And why would he drag you to a bachelor party, anyway, Charlotte?
Urp ...
What was my idiot brother thinking?
Good job, Charlotte.
Getting my bridesmaid so drunk she has a hangover on my wedding day!
At least you didn't throw up during the ceremony.

If she hadn't been green in the face today...
...she might have met someone, but you ruined it!
That's right, Gabe! Charlotte is going be the next one to wear a wedding dress!
Jump
Thunk
Exactly! Women are such meddlers.
Do you really think Charlotte is the wife type? She'll be just fine single for the rest of her life.
Now wait, Bella. Dana.
I know both of you are happily married, but I'm not interested in getting married yet.
Don't be mad because you lost the bet.
You were enjoying yourself, too.
What?
You were? 今日?
Uh...
Er...
You'd never make another woman sit through that!
That's why I had to drink tequila watching half-naked belly dancers.
All right, Gabe...!
I know that you don't think of me as a woman.
Gabe...! It's because you're always dragging Charlotte into these stupid games...
...that she can never find a boyfriend!
This is ridiculous.
Really...! I've had enough of you two acting like children.

Well, I suppose that time back in design school was a failure...
...but it was really that stylist's fault!
Of course! If you leave it to us...
...in 6 months, even 3 months, someone will want to marry her!
Snicker
I've never even seen her wear a skirt except for at your wedding.
Even though she wears a sweat-shirt and jeans to work?
Hmph!
Right! She could look absolutely gorgeous if she wanted to!
How rude ...!
...in her job as a graphic designer.
It's just because Charlotte doesn't usually get dressed up...
That still doesn't mean I'll spend the rest of my life alone!
Twitch
It's true. I tried to become more feminine...
and messed it up once before
Y-Yes...
That's true, Gabe.
Even I have a dream...
...that someday I'll be special to someone
Whether I can look good in a wedding dress is another story!
Chuckle
Huh ...?
What's happening here...?
Oh, come on. Don't let friendship blind you.
A marriage proposal in 3 months?
She couldn't do it if she dragged a man home, kicking and screaming!
Glare
Gabe...

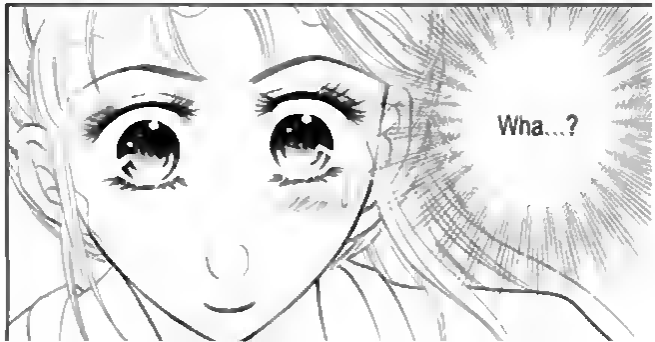
I love my job as a designer...
.. and playing poker or football with Gabe and his friends on the weekends
I love the way my life is right now
"She'll be just fine single for the rest of her life."
Why doesn't he realize how much that experience hurt me...?
Trying to be feminine just doesn't work for you! I can't keep seeing you.
That stupid, Gabe!
I don't even want to get married.
Why
...did I have to say that?
Hmph!
Okay! $500!
All right, $1000, then! We can even make it a month!
Charlotte! You can't bet on a thing like this...!
Daze
You can't be serious.
Even if we bet, the outcome is...
What.
It might be funny to you, since you're always having flings.
...so why don't we bet money this time?
Stand
Charlotte...!
I'm betting $1000 that someone will propose to me within a month!
It's a bet!

After thinking about it all night...
...there's no way I can win this bet.
T-thanks, Dana, but...
U-Um...
We'll show Gabe and make you happy at the same time...!
Fump
Just leave it to us!
D-Dana ...?
C-Cold!
Sit Sit
What are you doing?
But...
And read this! You'll have to refine yourself from the inside, too.
It's a facial treatment. You're letting that beautiful skin go to waste!
Squish
I'll just have to swallow my pride. .
. and call it off.
Ding Dong
Ding Dong
You're my best friend. . At least get that much straight!
Good morning, Charlotte!
What's all that stuff?
Huh...? Dana?
I've made reservations at a beauty salon in the afternoon. Then we go shopping.
By the time Bella gets back from her honeymoon, you'll look like Aphrodite herself!
Okay...! Today, a new Charlotte Taylor will be born!
Grr...
Click
Ugh... It's Sunday morning. Who could it be?
If it's Gabe, I'm really going to kill him!


What else are you supposed to be? A hamster?
Smirk
"Dramatic and classy. You are a lady; therefore, always act like it."
Let's see...
Shake
Rage
...Would you at least give me that book back?
Huh? Oh, right.
The Handbook to Becoming a Good Wife in One Year?
Are you serious?
You're actually going to read this?
Yoink
What a face, Charlotte...! Will that stuff come off by our next poker game?
It's an unfair poker-face advantage!
Gabe?
You don't really think you can get a man with this, do you?
Sh-Shut up! I can do whatever I want!
Grrr
Give that back!
Whoops!
Stop!
Again?
Charlotte! Just ignore Gabe!
Hey, you two...!
We have to get to the football game. Do you have anything to eat?
I'm always coming here. What are you making a big deal for?
W-W-What are you doing in my house?

Thud
Slam
Aiiie!

No way...!
Slip
Rustle

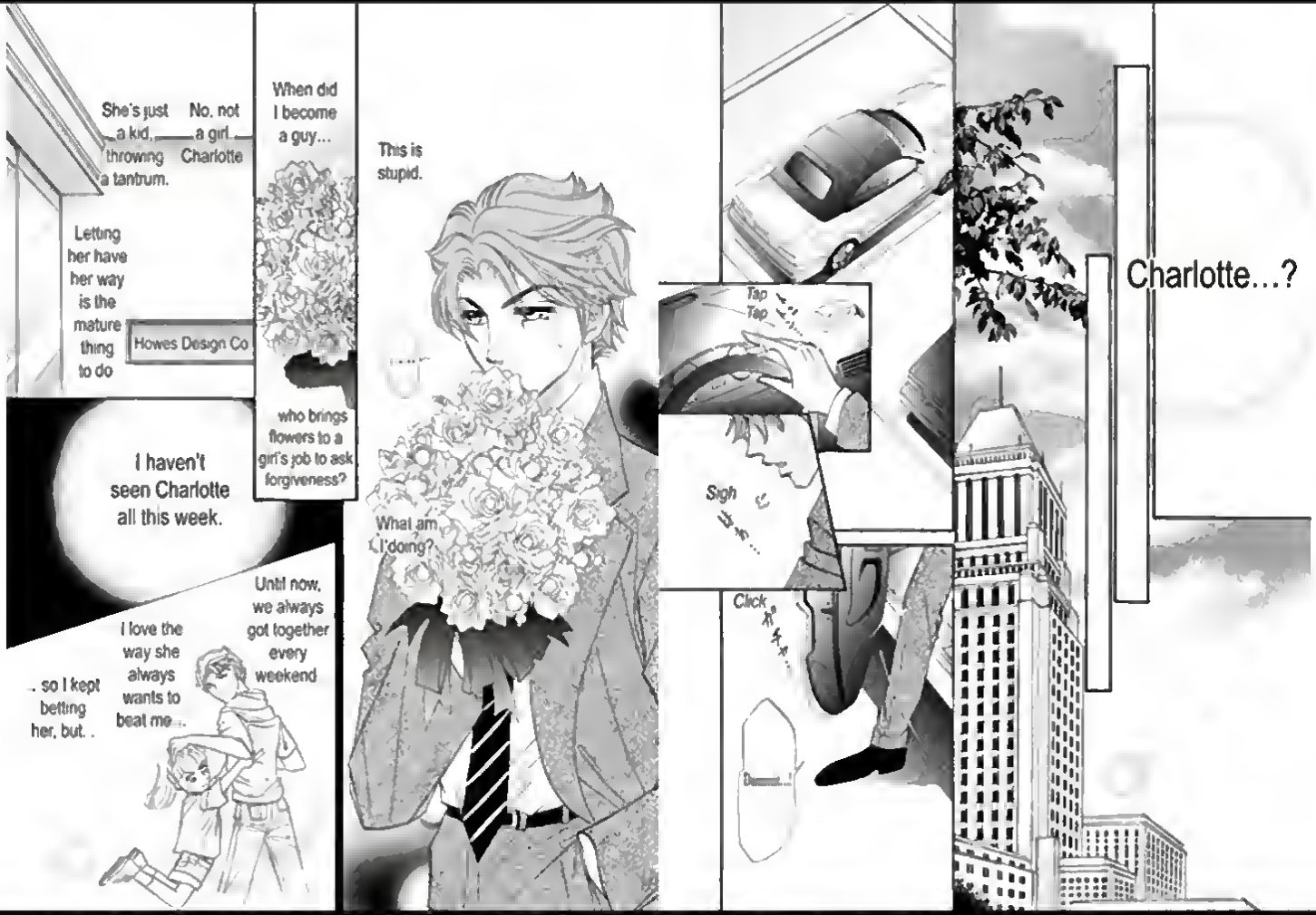

Wha...?

Charlotte, are you all right?
I-It's okay! Neighbors are always welcome!
Whoa
Whoa
He's super-handsome!
I guess I must have wandered into your yard.
Dust
Dust
Thank you.
I'm Jack Randall. Are you newlyweds?
.....
No way! Being married would be enough of a tragedy...
...but being married to the likes of her?
Huh ...?
Gulp
No... I should have been more careful.
Gasp
I-I'm so sorry! I wasn't looking where I was going.
Chuckle
I just moved in next door.
Sorry. I wasn't sure where the property line was.

I never knew...
...that handsome and great guys really exsted!
Charlotte ...!
Were you just talking to an incredibly handsome man?
Oh, no. .!
Snicker
I tripped, and...fell into some cake. You'll have to excuse me.
Welcome to the neighborhood, Jack. I'm Charlotte Taylor.
Whispor
By the way, Charlotte. Remember what's on your face right now?
Gasp
You're trying too hard!
I made a terrible first impression, thanks to you!
What are you laughing about?
Chuckle
I think you're probably the most beautiful woman I've ever met.
Nice to meet you, Charlotte.

Give it a rest, Dana.
Charlotte doesn't really want to rely on these books and makeup to find a husband.
Squeal
Squeal
Hey, it's him.
Huh.
Jack is living next door to you? This could be fate, Charlotte!
Jack Randall.
He's been named the most eligible bachelor in the country!
Aside from his looks and his skills, he's the heir to a huge industrial family fortune!
Jack Randall?
Yes. He seemed really nice.
He'd just moved into the neighborhood. Jack Randall, I think.
Nice...?
He was just trying to be social.
Really? Are you sure it was *the* Jack Randall?
The?
Don't you read any of the popular magazines?
This bet is ridiculous as it is.
Having all this pressure put on it is actually just a hassle, right?
I choose my friends on their own merits, not just what they look like!
in other words ..
. . no matter how *plain* I am, I'm still equal as his friend
And what did he mean, "the likes of her"?

So don't invite me to poker or football for a while.
I don't need you to pity me by letting me be your friend...!
I'm not giving it up.
You're right. I wasn't thinking clearly when I made the bet.
But... I'm thinking clearly now.
.....
I'm going to become more feminine...
...and ring the church bells in one month with a wonderful guy at my side.


She's just a kid, throwing a tantrum.
No, not a girl. Charlotte
Letting her have her way is the mature thing to do
Howes Design Co
When did I become a guy...
who brings flowers to a girl's job to ask forgiveness?
I haven't seen Charlotte all this week.
Until now, we always got together every weekend
I love the way she always wants to beat me...
...so I kept betting her, but...
This is stupid.
What am I doing?
Tap Tap
Sigh
Click
Charlotte...?

Gasp
I just won't mention the bet...
and try to work things out.
Click
Clack~
I know I went too far this time
Right about now, she's probably regretting it and wanting to get things back to normal, too.

Blush
You haven't come to my work in a long time.
W-What is it? You surprised me.
Where's her sweater?
Where's the unkempt ponytail she always wore?
Where are her jeans?
When did your company switch from sportswear to suits?
You're wearing a suit in the middle of the day?
Charlotte...?
Daze
...Huh?
Gabe···?

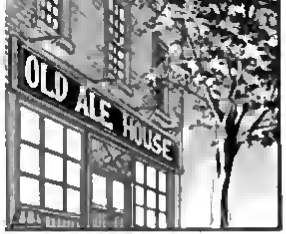
It's better than that.
The bright waves of her elegant hair...
...bring out the hazel in her eyes.
Breathtaking.
Were her legs always this long?
Her slender neckline rises from her fashionable sundress
Oh, good...
It's the high heels.
Exactly the kind of sensual curves I like.
What's with that face?
Do I really look that bad?
Yeah, right.
There's no way he was just passing by...!
Let me know any time you need a hand.
T-Thank you, Roland.
He was just passing by and offered to help me get some materials.
I don't remember him being in your section.
No.
No, it's not.
Huh...?
Oh, er. No... It's fine.

It's him again.
Good luck!
Charlotte! Phone call!
Ring Ring
RRR
Huh ...?
...So you're saying that I'd get hurt because men wouldn't be interested in me?
Hmph
Yes, this is Charlotte Taylor.
Oh, Jack! Yes, it's fine. Thank you.
Hmph
Click
Can you hold on, Gabe?
It might be someone asking me on a date.
Fump
What are you thinking, Gabe ..?
Here! For you!
It's obvious that you'll lose, so...
...I didn't want to see you get hurt over this.
Gabe...
Wow...! What for?
It's a white flag. I thought you'd be having regrets about this stupid bet.

Flash
Jack
Click
Hmph!
See? Even I can get a date if I—
Step
Let go of me...!
You went out to dinner on that celebrity punk's whim?
What are you, stupid...?
Ah...!
He hasn't even lived here a week!
Glance
What? A party in Century City on Saturday?
Oh, but... I don't have anything formal to wear...
Jack Randall?
You don't need to thank me for dinner.
You're the one who paid the bill.
Giggle
Smile
I suppose so. All right, I'll come.
I never have anything to do on the weekends, anyway. 7 o'clock? I'll be waiting, Jack.

Oh...
Gasp
Seems you've already changed inside as well as outside for this stupid bet.
.....
Fine.
Who do you think you are, my father?
I can take care of myself!
Ha...! Yeah, right. You've barely ever been on a date before! What do you know?
Charlotte, I...
...I'm just saying it's dangerous to go out with strange guys.
How could he say that ..?
Why don't you be honest ....?
You just can't understand why a great guy like him would ask me out, right?
Swack
Get out...!
Why do you always have to be like this?

She's not like other girls who storm off after the first argument!
D-Don't be stupid!
Charlotte is a friend, not a girlfriend.
You really go through women quick!
Oh, man... You finally broke up with Charlotte, too?
There used to be someone I was really serious about, but...
...it ended badly.
Besides, I'm not cut out for romance.
Maybe the way she's taking the bet so seriously
...is because she fell for Jack at first sight?
And over a poof like Jack ..!
The problem is that Charlotte is trying to destroy that friendship!
That's when I realized ...
...you can trust friendship more than love.

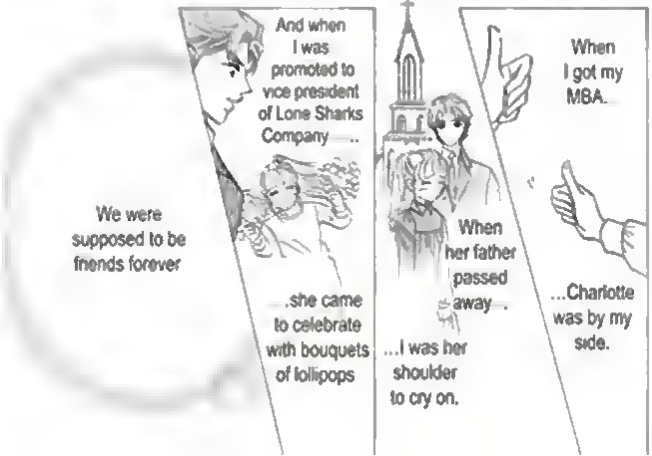

OLD ALE HOUSE

Hey, Gabe.
Huh? Where's Charlotte?
Hmph!
Not here, again!
Grrr
Grrr
What's his problem?
You're in a bad mood today.
Had a fight with Charlotte!

Slam
Gabe...
I didn't change for things to turn out like this.

.. then dumped her, saying she wasn't feminine enough.
In the end, that jerk
...made Charlotte wear all kinds of stupid clothes

...how sad and angry it made her feel
She's never forgotten...


We were supposed to be friends forever
And when I was promoted to vice president of Lone Sharks Company...
...she came to celebrate with bouquets of lollipops
When her father passed away...
...I was her shoulder to cry on.
When I got my MBA...
...Charlotte was by my side.

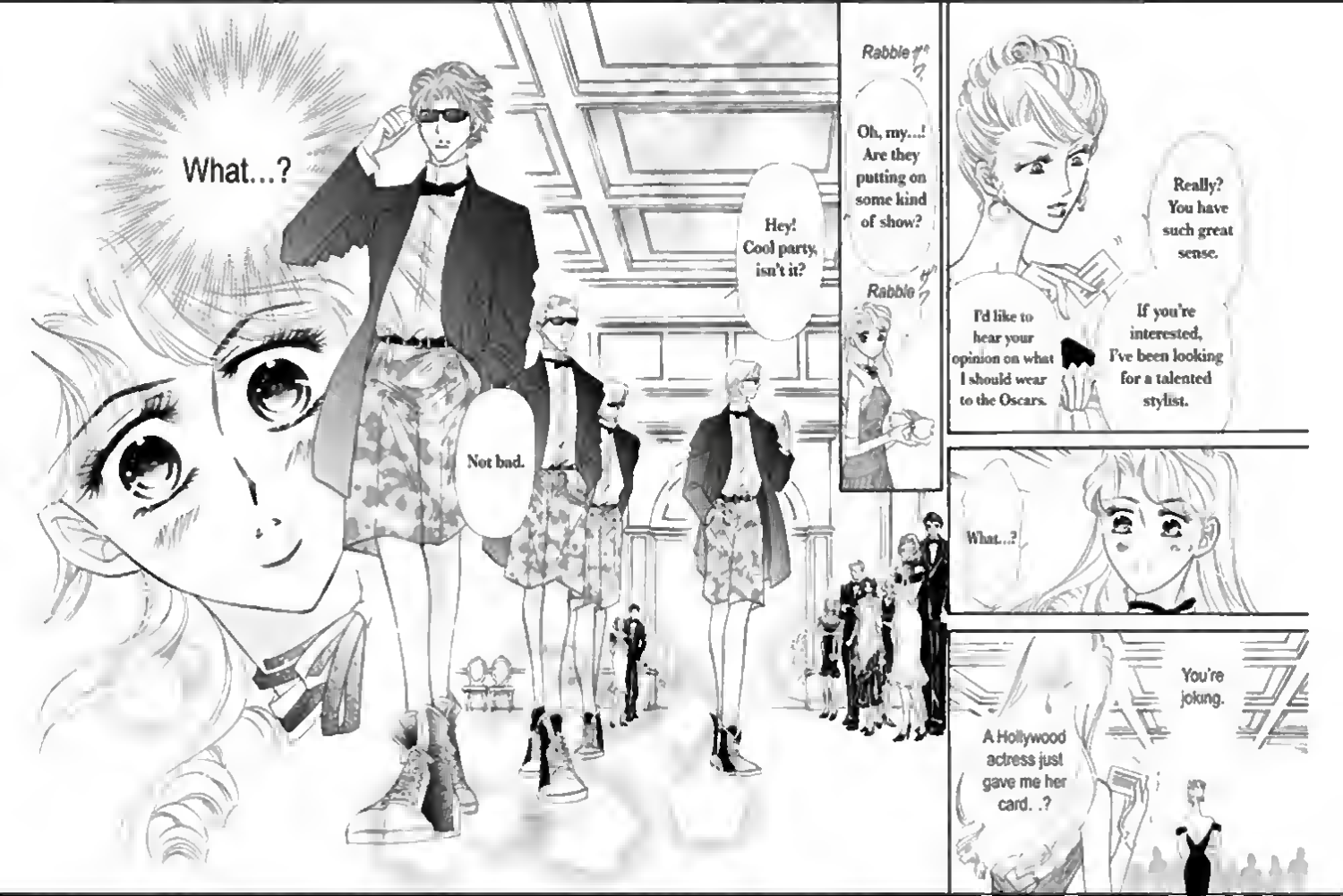
Once, when I was visiting during college
I was looking forward to seeing the neighborhood tomboy again.
Charlotte...
More importantly...
If Charlotte was to get married... Would I still have a place in her life?

But Charlotte was all over this guy she was seeing at design school
She didn't have any time for me
I don't even remember his face...!
Jack is an seasoned celebrity
There's no way he's serious about someone with no dating experience like Charlotte!

Rabble
I'm going to stop my best friend from making the same mistake
Smile
Snicker
Snicker
.. and save her from another tragedy.

.....
.....
Stand
Ryan. Can you get invitations to the party in Century City tomorrow?
At the Sheffields' place? I can call in a favor.
That's right.
This isn't just a bet anymore.
Smile
Get your tuxedos ready, guys!
We're going to put some life into that boring formal party!

You look very good in that dress.
That bright red is so memorable! It was a good idea.
I'm already attracting the attention of the entire party.
I don't want to embarrass myself any further.
I have to go. Should I introduce you?
No, thanks. I'll wait.
I got in a fight with Gabe..
...talked myself into a corner...
...and went out and bought a bright red dress.
I know, Jack. It's fine. Don't worry.
I'm so sorry, Charlotte ...!
I didn't read the invitation carefully enough.
I didn't know that this party ...
...would be a black-and-white tuxedo ball...!
I swear I didn't forget to tell you on purpose.
Snicker
Snicker
What a lovely lady, Jack.
Would you come say hello to my husband?
Wow ..! I've seen her in movies!
O-Oh, no!
I'm just a designer, and...
Huh ...?
Everyone is talking about you tonight. Well done!
Are you an actress, too?
I want to come take a look.
I see! That makes sense.
What? No, I work in graphic design, not fashion.
Have you already released your fall collection?


What...?
Not bad.
Hey! Cool party, isn't it?
Rabble
Oh, my...! Are they putting on some kind of show?
Rabble
I'd like to hear your opinion on what I should wear to the Oscars.
If you're interested, I've been looking for a talented stylist.
Really? You have such great sense.
What...?
A Hollywood actress just gave me her card. .?
You're joking.

What is he wearing?
Pht!
Gabe! Guys!
That's worse than me!
Gulp
Charlotte
Daze..
Rabble
A Manhattan Beach fashion show?
Snap
Snap
Look over here!
They're cool!
It can't be. That's..
I knew it! Gabe!
Oh, you guys!
Giggle
You're great at shocking people!
Why are you here?
Charlotte? We're the ones who are shocked!
You look like Cinderella! Doesn't she, Gabe?
Y-Yeah...

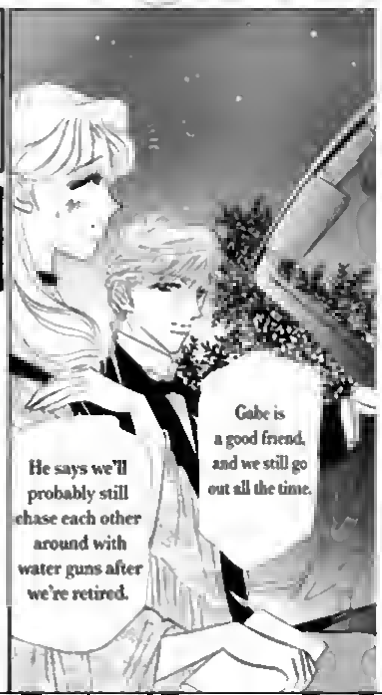
Something up-tempo
Okay, then. Now that you've made up, go dance!
Don't worry. The music is about to change.
What are you guys doing? This isn't a dance club!
Who cares? Give me your hand, Cinderella.
Or are you too scared...?
The waltz...?

She'll never suspect the actual plan...
Huh. Good.
...was to ruin the party and embarrass Jack.
Hope he doesn't come back.
Really? You were worried about me?
Cough
That dress of yours...
...it looks great on you. You should wear it with pride.
You really have great timing. I didn't know what to do, dressed like this!
Charlotte is smiling.
Phew
You said you weren't used to formal parties...
...so we came to liven up the mood.
And after I...
Thank you, Gabe.
I was waiting for you to say that..!
Good.
Gabe isn't mad at me anymore.

Look at those two!
They're amazing!
Let's dance, too!
Of course not...!
Bring on Latin swing, hip-hop, anything!

I'm sorry for what I did to your flowers.
What?
Gabe ...?
Ppht
Oh, well. It was my fault, too.
I didn't mean it to sound that way, but your transformation really shocked me.
Is that a compliment? All right. We're even.
I'm having a great time
I'm happy to be laughing with Gabe like this again
Having friends is so great.
Oh, Gabe!
Charlotte ...!
Hey, Charlotte ...
Why did you bet me that—
The dance floor is getting lively.
Clap Clap
Wow! ワッ…!!
Charlotte ...?
Think so? The guests are enjoying it, so they should thank us!
Look what we've done to the formal party.
If the organizer finds out, we're in trouble.

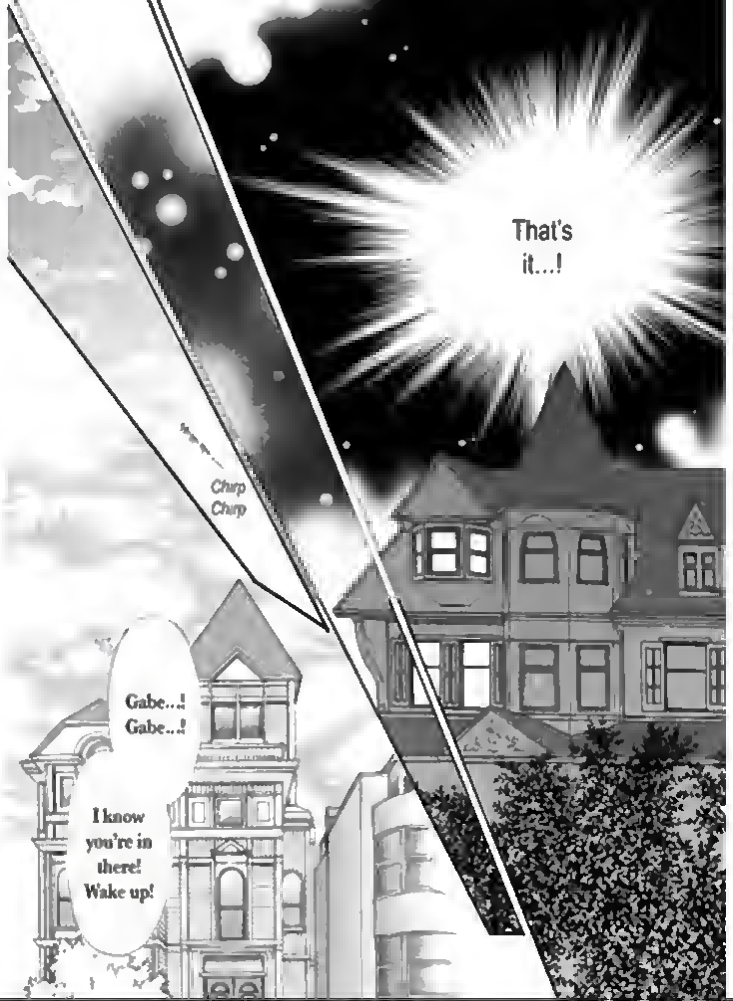
Gabe..
I'll see you later... Say goodbye to the others for me.
Why can't I find a reason to stop her?
Bad timing.
Damn ...!
It's a party show that Gabe and I put on
This was the first time we'd done it all dressed up, though.
Too bad! You would have been the toast of any party you went to. Right, Gabe?
Jack...!
You were amazing!
I didn't know you could dance like that!
What do you know?
Yeah ...
Char-lotte...!
...
Let's go.
Have you had enough of the party?
I may not have been your dance partner, but at least I can take you home.


Gabe is a good friend, and we still go out all the time.
He says we'll probably still chase each other around with water guns after we're retired.

Do you love him...?

You're so fun...
...and somehow, you don't realize how beautiful you are.
Uh...
I've never met a girl like you.
Then... Do we still have a chance?
Gabe...
. he knows this isn't the real me.
...I had a reason for choosing this dress.
...What?
...I'd never let another man take you home.
If you were mine...
Jack...?
Vroom

...it was more fun than usual, and exciting
But getting dressed up and dancing...
In Gabe's eyes...
...I'm probably still an 8-year-old
I know one man who doesn't!
...I felt through silk, for the first time.
The warmth of his fingers I always felt through a sweater.
"Do you love him, ..?"
Even though it might mean I can win that reckless wager with Gabe.
There must be something wrong with me.
Click
I don't feel that happy Jack kissed me.
Why do I keep thinking about it ..?
So what's wrong with me ..?
"I don't think that any man who saw you tonight could not think of you as a woman."
If he knew I was thinking about this...
...I'm sure he'd think it was creepy.
I'm so tired!
Fump
ボフッ
Gabe is my best friend!

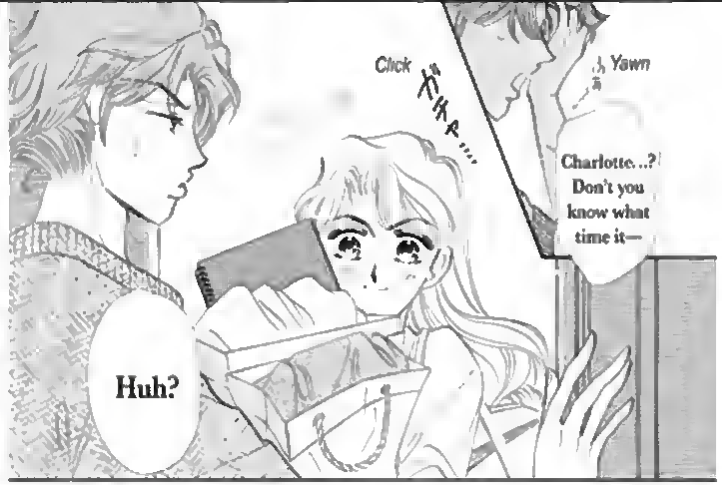

That's it...!
Chirp Chirp
Gabe...! Gabe...!
I know you're in there! Wake up!

That reminds me...
Rise
Why do I keep thinking about this...?
"You have such great sense.
I've been looking for a talented stylist."

Talented? Me...?

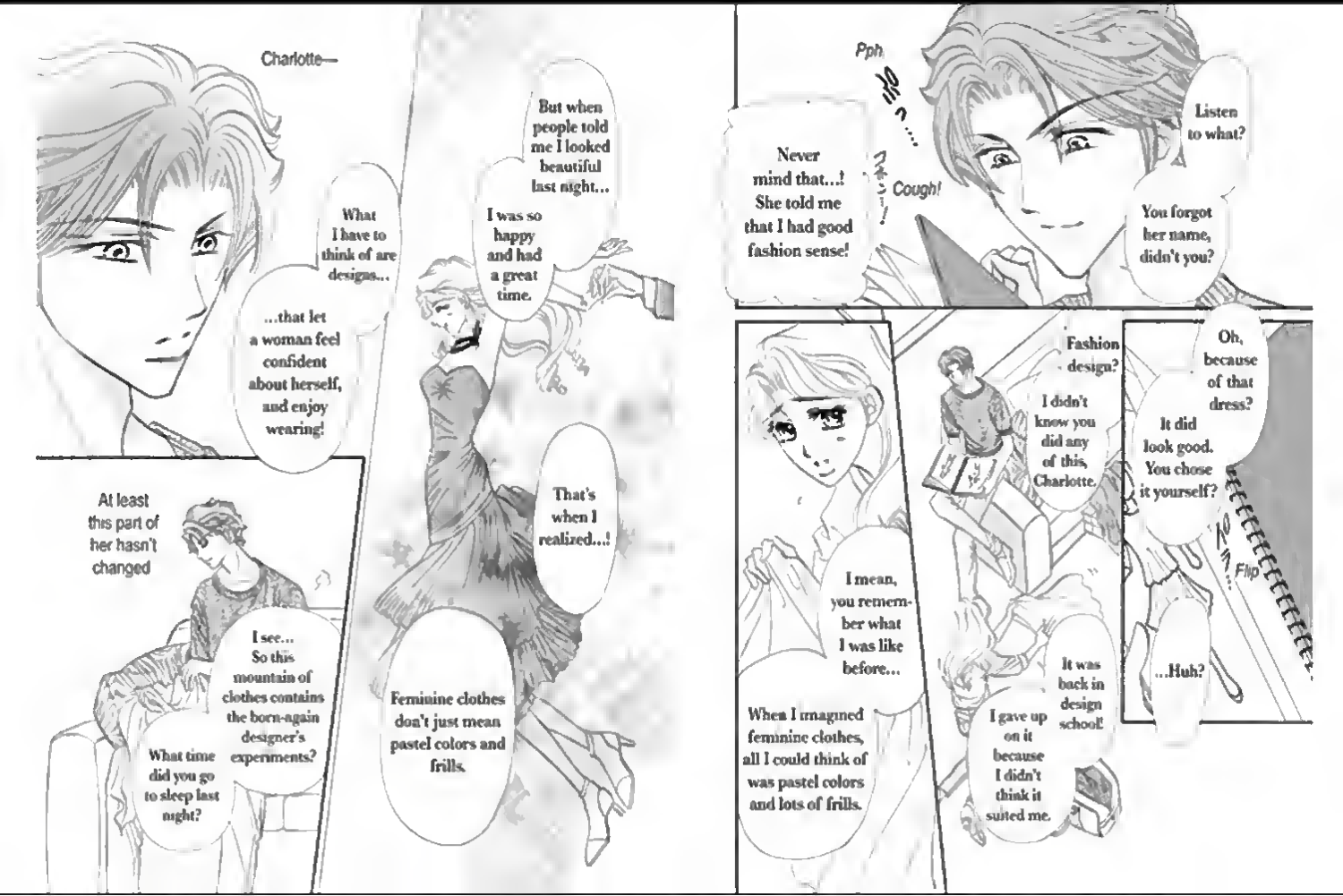
...take a look at this!
Ha ha. First...
You're not moving in, are you?
So? What's all that stuff?
Fump
Good!
She's back to wearing her jeans and sweater

Just listen, okay?
Yesterday at the party, some actress gave me her card!
A sketch-book?
Fump Fump
A design sketch-book...!


Huh?
Click
Yawn
Charlotte...? Don't you know what time it—

Yeah, right.
No...
I kept worrying about what happened with you and Jack afterward
and I couldn't sleep!

Good morning, Gabe!
It's past noon, but I knew you'd still be asleep.
You guys didn't stay out at that party, did you?


Charlotte—
What I have to think of are designs...
...that let a woman feel confident about herself, and enjoy wearing!
But when people told me I looked beautiful last night...
I was so happy and had a great time.
That's when I realized...!
Feminine clothes don't just mean pastel colors and frills.
At least this part of her hasn't changed
I see... So this mountain of clothes contains the born-again designer's experiments?
What time did you go to sleep last night?
Pph
Cough!
Never mind that...! She told me that I had good fashion sense!
Listen to what?
You forgot her name, didn't you?
I mean, you remember what I was like before...
When I imagined feminine clothes, all I could think of was pastel colors and lots of frills.
Fashion design?
I didn't know you did any of this, Charlotte.
It was back in design school!
I gave up on it because I didn't think it suited me.
Oh, because of that dress?
It did look good. You chose it yourself?
Flip
...Huh?

Flap
Hm?
きょと……
You're the vice president of a sportswear company, aren't you?
I know you sell women's products, so I want your opinion.
Huh? What do you mean?
I'm going to show you my designs.
Scratch Scratch
Yeah, but I don't know those women!
Charlo —
Change there for all of these? Too much trouble.
Besides, you're used to seeing half-naked belly dancers.
Here...! This is my first design!
Blush
Why ...
...aren't you changing in the bathroom, then?
I only had time to take a shower and change before coming here.
Even when she isn't dressed up like a woman
Charlotte is always so cute when she's fixated on something
Actually... I haven't slept. I was busy making these.
What are you doing?
Char-lotte?
Uh
Stupid. You shouldn't stay up working all night.
Clatter

Friend..
A-All right...
...it will make me think you actually see me as a woman!
If you make faces like that...
You're supposed to be my friend!
Would you pay attention?
That's exactly right.
I've seen plenty of beauties dressed in less
If she doesn't care, why should I?
Of course, I never had to sit still and watch them.
This would be torture for any man
Turn
Well?
It's true It doesn't show off much skin...
but the subtle lines enhance the chest and legs
Huh? Uh, yeah.
It's really good.
All I had was the color sample cloth from work...
...but you get the idea, right?
Gabe! Hand me that dress you're sitting on!
W-Will you *please* change in the bathroom?
Huh? Where did that dress go?
The next one is even better.

They're simple, but the lines enhance femininity.
The coloring is good, too. They make the hair and skin look sexy and radiant.
...probably took 10 years off my life
Although seeing you in your underwear...
Phew
Hon-estly... I'm sur-prised.
That's all of them. What do you think?
Gulp
Give me honest feedback!
I could never imagine being called that before...!
Giggle
Sexy?
Wow.
Smile
Not sleeping is just now catching up with you?
I'm a little tired...
Yawn
Mm... Maybe after I make some better ones.
Should I take a sample to our design depart-ment?
...I'm surprised that Charlotte had this kind of talent.
Still...
"I gave up on it because I didn't think it suited me."
I never knew she was ever even interested in fashion design, either.
Maybe... I don't know everything about her...?

"You're my best friend, Gabe."
Don't betray her trust.
As long as I can hold back and not touch her...
...we can stay friends forever.
With each day, I get less sure I can control my desire for her.
It was when I saw that red dress
My body heated up.
When I saw her leaving with Jack...
...my heart was telling me to go after her and punch his lights out.
Nod
Murmur
Snip
You're my best friend, Gabe.
I'm honored. Thank you.
I really went full steam because I wanted to show you first thing in the morning.
Zzz
Best friend...
...so why do I get the feeling that my logic is starting to betray me?
There's no danger of breaking up over a stupid fight.
As best friends, we can be together forever
Roll
Why am I conflicted? This is exactly what I wanted.

Rustle
Rustle
Hey, wake up, Charlotte.
Mmm ...
It's 7 o'clock at night already.
If you sleep now, you won't be able to sleep at night.
Haze
Gabe .
Wake up.
You want some coffee?
Charlotte .
Rub
Oh, man... Did I fall asleep, too?

...that deep...
It feels so good...
...familiar voice.
Yes... Please...
Flash
Haze
Charlotte ...?
What?

Pure Romance

HARLEQUIN

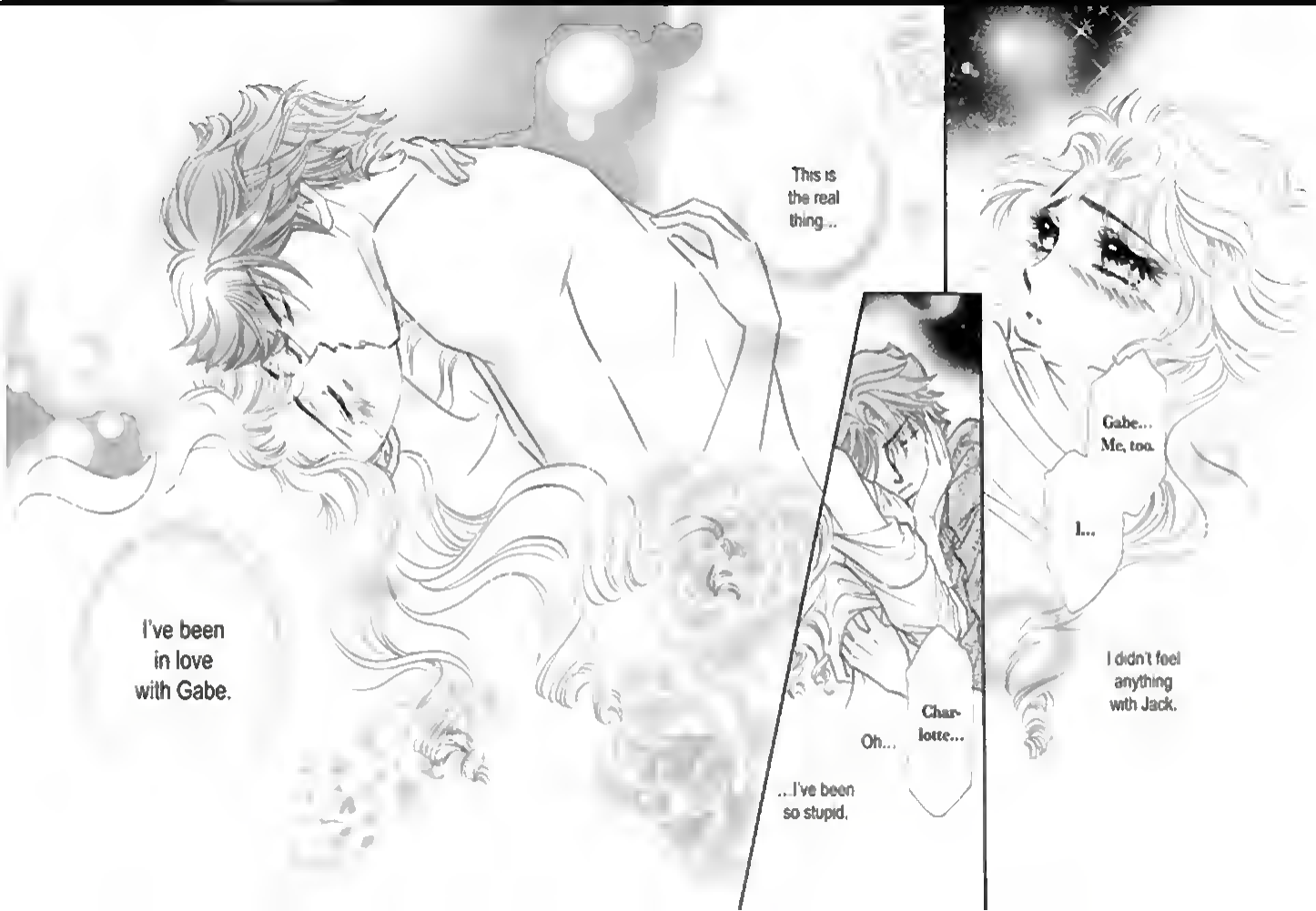
The Cinderella Solution

Original Text by Cassie Yardley

Kyoko Sagara

She's half-asleep
Calm down, Gabe.
Gabe...
Murmur
Char-lotte...
Resist.
All you have to do is resist
Gasp

Dammit ...
...I tried to resist.
Char-lotte...
Why...
...do you make me so crazy?
Blush
Gabe...
Gabe...!
I want you...
...Char-lotte...
My body is burning up...!
Char-lotte...
Gabe...?


I've been in love with Gabe.
This is the real thing...
..I've been so stupid.
Oh...
Char-lotte...
I didn't feel anything with Jack.
I...
Gabe... Me, too.

What?
Charlotte...?
Chirp
Chirp
Fwoosh

It was only because Charlotte was my friend...
...that no matter how many times we fought...
...we would always make up.
What if Charlotte
...gets fed up with me now and leaves, like the others...?
I can't stop her as a friend anymore
Until now
...I've never had a lasting relationship.
Every time, in the end...
...we fought about what we wanted, and an ugly breakup ensued.
"You're my best friend, Gabe..."
"I swore to myself that I wouldn't touch her...
What have I done...?
I've betrayed my best friend and dragged her into bed with me...!
Do you even know what real love is?
I feel stupid for wanting to be with you...!
Gabe...! A woman has to feel like she's the most important thing.

Smile
Okay, you two.
Have whatever you like. It's on me.
You're in a good mood, Charlotte.
It's a little creepy
Well, of course. I was surprised.
And what about Jack? Do you think you can win the bet?
I didn't think things would change this much during my honeymoon!
Otherwise...
...I'll lose her forever.
Now is the time to stop it.
Before it's too late.
Charlotte
Meet me at 7:30 tonight at the usual place.
Gabe.
Touch
Mm
Fwoosh

I'm so lucky
My dream came true
I'm in a relationship with my best fnend for the past 20 years...!
I finally understand why I wanted to win that bet so badly
...I never had the confidence.
I always settled for being his fnend.
The truth is .
I'd always wanted to be Gabe's girl-fnend, but...
But somewhere in my heart...
...I wanted to become even a little prettier and have him see me as a woman.
"I want you, Char-lotte "
from Gabe's lips
I can't believe I'd ever hear those words...
Smile
Chuckle
Bet ...?
I forgot all about that.
Did someone already propose to you...?
Really?
Was it Jack?
So what do you keep smiling about?
but he wants me to wait at the usual place?
He must want to announce our relationship in front of our poker buddies
I didn't know what to do when he was gone in the morning
Just wait a little longer.
I'm sure I'll be able to tell you soon.

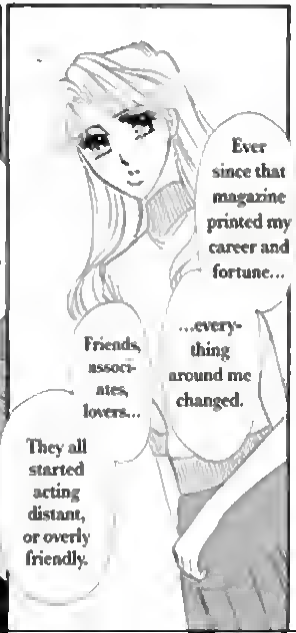
Last night...
...I had forgotten that you were my best friend, Charlotte.
What ...?
And you... You were half-asleep, too, right?
I think... That we should go back to being just friends.
We made a mistake, and for that I'm sorry.
Gulp
Charlotte...
...I didn't call anyone else. It's just us.
OLD ALE HOUSE
Huh? Where is everybody?
Sorry to keep you waiting, Gabe.
Gabe ...?
He's acting strange.
Charlotte... I have to apologize to you for that.
When...
...did she get this beautiful?
Oh...
I had lunch with Dana and Bella today, but I couldn't tell them about us yet.

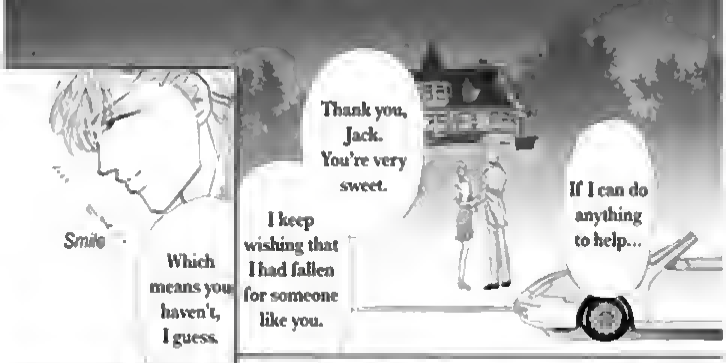
Rise
...All right, Gabe.
Thank you for telling me before I got the wrong idea.
Gasp
Getting into a fight about romance... wouldn't really be like us, would it?
I thought I had changed from the old tomboy Charlotte to Charlotte, a woman who is loved.
But I guess you can't love me, after all.
I think... that I was fooling myself.
Rise
Is she.. crying?
Char-lotte ...?
Drop
I'm so lucky..
...What?
Gabe ..?

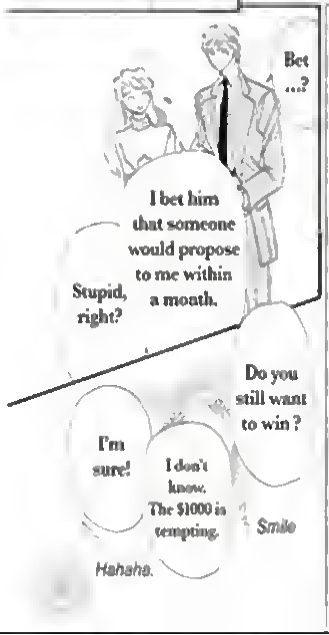
Thank you, Jack.
I had fun tonight.
What ...?
You've been sighing constantly on all the dates we've been on in the past few days.
Really? It didn't seem that way to me.
Gabe...
If I win the bet, I'll let you pay in installments, okay?
Still, let's not see each other for a while.
Now I have to find someone who'll really love me.
Yes. Of course.
Charlotte... You know how much your friendship means to me, don't you?
Charlotte...?

...I've been asking you out every night?
...Charlotte.
Do you know why...

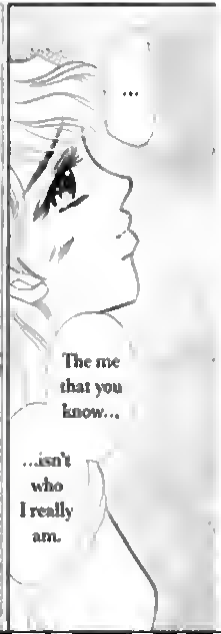
The reason I rented the house next to you...
Jack
...was because I wanted a place to get away from those people.
I had no idea...
...and I've just been going on about my own problems the entire time.
That's fine. That's exactly why I like you.


Ever since that magazine printed my career and fortune...
...everything around me changed.
Friends, associates, lovers...
They all started acting distant, or overly friendly.


Smile
Which means you haven't, I guess.
Thank you, Jack. You're very sweet.
I keep wishing that I had fallen for someone like you.
If I can do anything to help...


Bet ...?
I bet him that someone would propose to me within a month.
Stupid, right?
Do you still want to win?
I'm sure!
I don't know. The $1000 is tempting.
Smile
Hahaha.

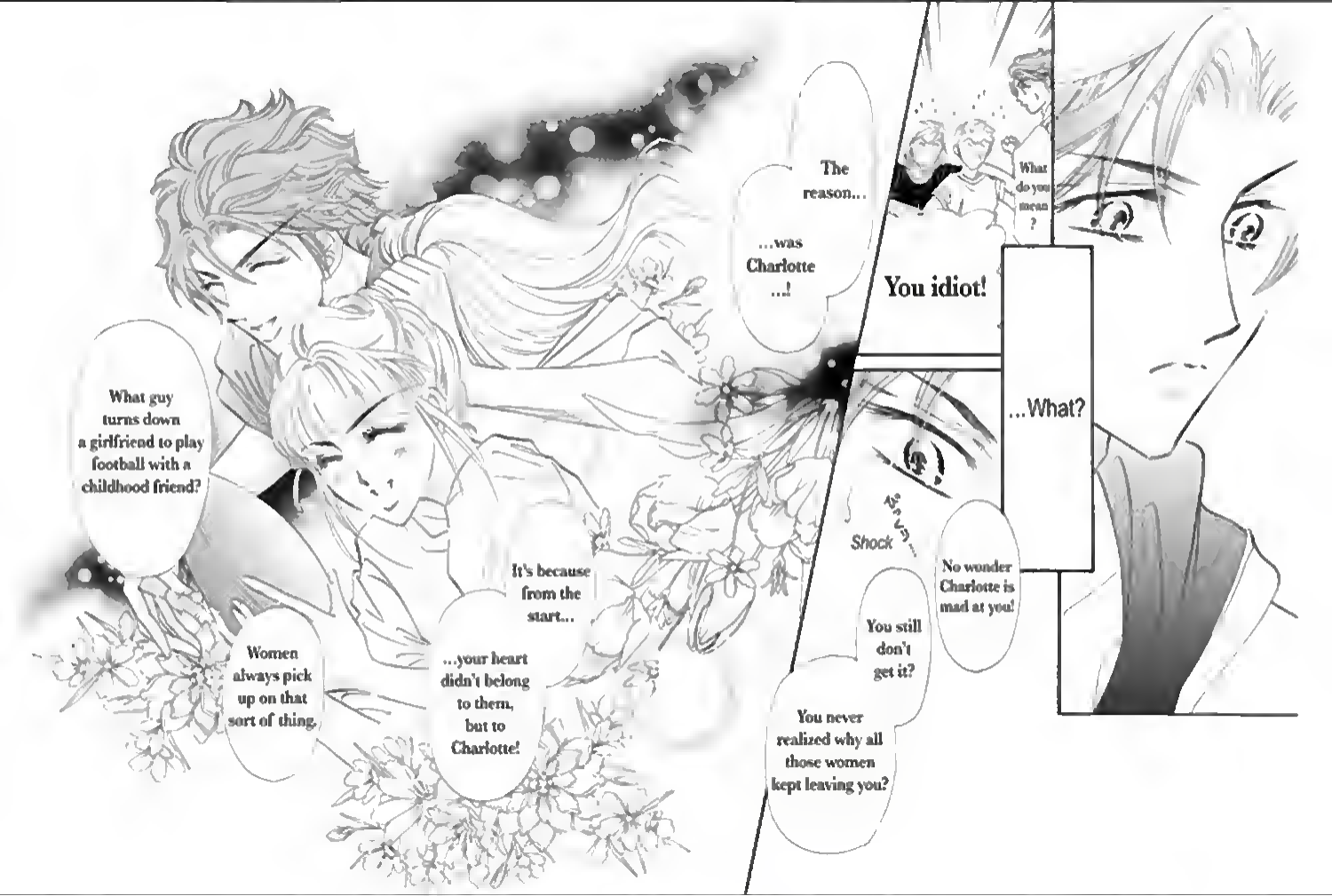
No.
But... I don't have the courage to go back to the way I was.
. I can't go back to hiding how I feel
. and keep being just friends with Gabe
I guess I can't win his love or his bet.


...
The me that you know...
...isn't who I really am.

Gabe...!
We haven't seen you in days, and this is what you come out to do?
Shut up! Get lost!
Yeah. You've even been skipping poker and football. What's wrong with you?
Man, what's with the attitude?
Jack...?
Lap
Charlotte... I enjoy being with you.
You aren't like any other woman I've ever met.
Would you mind if I used that bet as an excuse?
I want you to come to New York with me.
Marry me.

Silence
What ...?
Huh.
Oh.
Scratch Scratch
So? What's the problem?
I knew it would happen eventually.
Yeah, we heard you.
Bout time.
Uh-huh.
Hey... I just told you I slept with her.
"I love you," didn't you...?
You told Charlotte...

"We shouldn't see each other for a while."
Actually ...
...she probably won't be coming anymore.
Who knows?
Hmph!
I haven't seen Charlotte lately, either. Have you, Gabe?
Who cares about poker if Charlotte isn't there...?
Because I blew it!
Because it didn't occur to me Charlotte wanted a relationship!
What?
Why?
Mutter
I...
I slept with her.
Gag
What does that mean? The way she changed, all of a sudden...
...you're hiding something from us lately!
I'm not hiding any—
We just got you to make up!
You two are fighting again?
It's not like that! I lost her!


What guy turns down a girlfriend to play football with a childhood friend?
Women always pick up on that sort of thing.
It's because from the start...
...your heart didn't belong to them, but to Charlotte!
The reason...
...was Charlotte ...!
You still don't get it?
You never realized why all those women kept leaving you?
What do you mean?
You idiot!
...What?
Shock
No wonder Charlotte is mad at you!

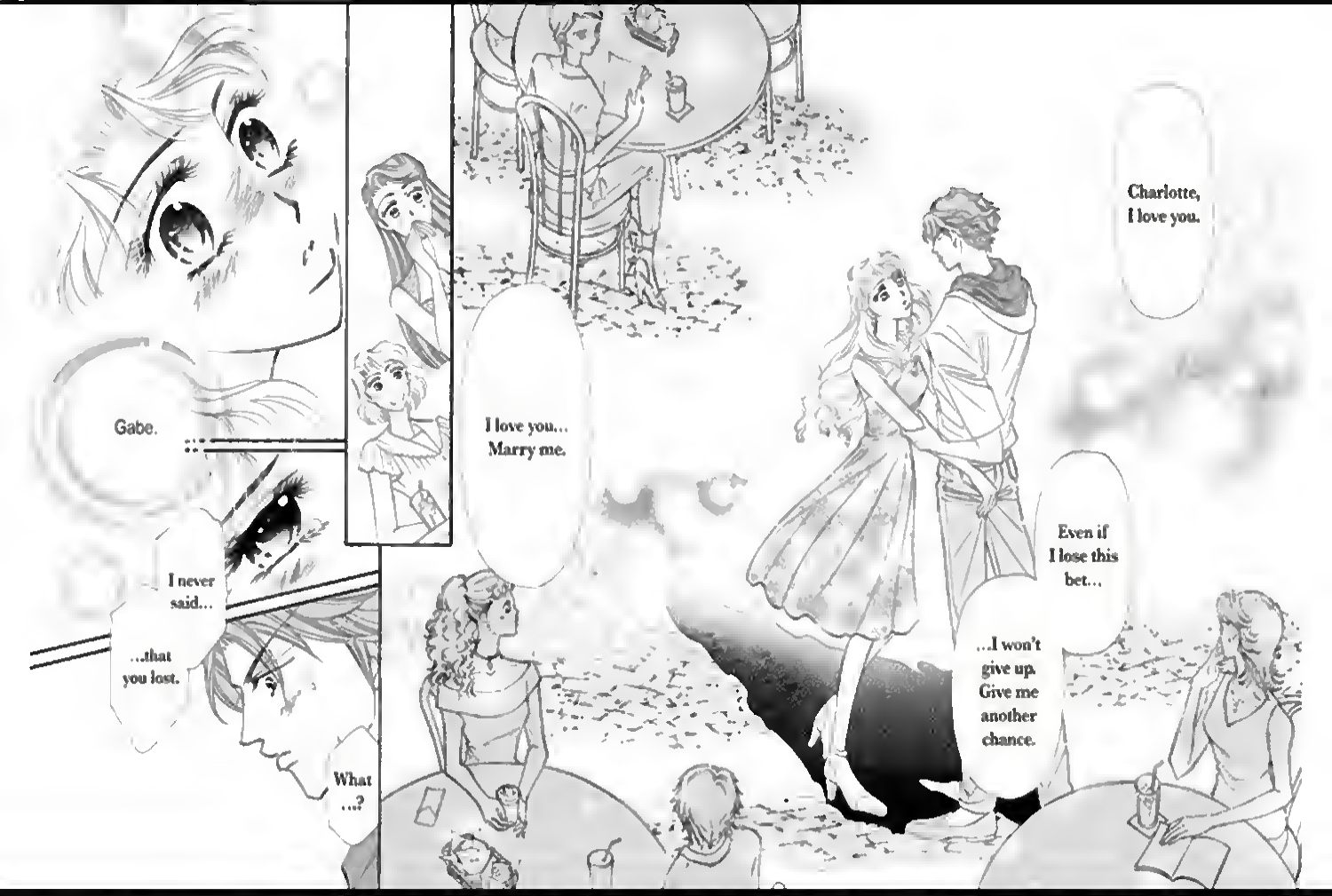
Charlotte...
She was in love with me? So was I...
...and I made her cry like that...!
"I guess you can't love me, after all."
I couldn't stand it when she smiled at other men
The thing was...
You two have been close for too long.
Didn't you notice when Charlotte got all feminine?
You should have just told her how you felt then!
I was bored on the weekends when she wasn't around...
and I wanted to keep her all to myself.
It's not that you're not cut out for love...
...you just never loved any woman other than Charlotte...!
Wha...
That was when she was 8 years old, right?
I never felt anything for her or saw her in that way.
I don't think so.
Me...?
...in love with Charlotte?

Flap
Wait, you two...
...this is...
Charlotte! Is this article true?
Did Jack really propose to you?
A gossip maga-zine?
Bella and Dana left in a rush, saying they were going to see Charlotte!
You're late, Brad.
Never mind that!
Gabe ...!
You have to see this!
There's a picture of Charlotte with Jack Randall.
It says that Jack is finally marrying the girl in the red dress...!

I wish he'd at least look a little surprised.
Gabe hasn't reacted a bit
.....
Clatter
Why ..
Why does he have to hurt me like this?
..and throw it in his face ..!
I'll take it...
Flip
Fine. You win.
I'll write you a check. Come take it.
Why is he here .?
All right... You want to know if you've lost the bet.
It's true. Jack proposed to me.
I knew it! Congratulations, Charlotte!
Whoa!
Do you mind...
...if I hear that reason, too?
Gabe...?

...I can make you happier than any other man.
Give me one last chance.
I bet that for the next 50 years...
Yank
What...?

I still didn't realize how I felt about you.
I said such horrible things because I didn't want you taken by anyone else after you changed.
How it must have felt for you to keep this bet going...
...I understand that now.
I know. It worked.
I even went to Jack's party because I wanted to split you up.
...I just wanted you to see me as a woman.
I can't live without you.
That hasn't changed.
Gabe...
I know I said we should be friends...
...because I was afraid I would lose you if we had a romantic relationship.
I didn't know who I really was...
...or how badly I hurt you, Charlotte.
Forgive me.
Gabe...?


Gabe.
I never said...
...that you lost.
What ...?
I love you... Marry me.
Charlotte, I love you.
Even if I lose this bet...
...I won't give up. Give me another chance.

This time...
...it's a bet we'll both win.
Yes We'll make another bet
I turned Jack down on his proposal.
There won't be any wedding bells.
I mean, even if I marry someone other than you...
...they wouldn't put up with the games that we play, right?
The Cinderella Solution
The End